

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY CLINTON

The Passing of Senator Byrd

Today our country has lost a true American original, my friend and mentor Robert C. Byrd.

Senator Byrd was a man of surpassing eloquence and nobility. And I will remember him for many things, but most of all for a heartfelt comment he made to me in the dark days following the attack on our country on 9/11. My state of New York was reeling and we were scrambling to provide support and relief. "Think of me as the third senator from New York," he said. And he meant it. Thanks to the leadership of Senator Byrd, who chaired the Appropriations Committee, New Yorkers and Americans got the help we needed. I will never forget his devotion and his friendship in that critical time.

It is almost impossible to imagine the United States Senate without Robert Byrd. He was not just its longest serving member, he was its heart, its soul, and its historian. From my first day in the Senate, I sought out his guidance, and he was always generous with his time and his wisdom. I admired his tireless advocacy for his West Virginia constituents, his fierce defense of the Constitution and the traditions of the Senate, and his passion for a government that improves the lives of the people it serves.

As Secretary of State, I continued to rely on his advice and counsel. I've been grateful for the support he provided as a leader of the Appropriations Committee to our diplomats and development workers as they serve our country and advance our interests all over the world.

Robert C. Byrd led by the power of his example, and he made all of us who had the honor of serving as his colleagues better public servants and better citizens. After more than five decades of service, he left an indelible imprint on the Senate, on West Virginia, and on our nation. We will not see his like again.

I am heartened to know that Senator Byrd is now reunited with his beloved Erma, the high-school sweetheart who became his wife of nearly 70 years, the love and light of his life. My thoughts and prayers are with their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Robert C. Byrd left such a legacy.

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